



MI NETS



STATES



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## Michigan Network of Employers for Traffic Safety

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# Standard Safety Belt Enforcement Passes!!

On May 12, 1999, the Michigan Senate passed SB 335, the standard safety belt enforcement bill, the final step for approval. The legislation represents the culmination of a long-term effort by traffic safety and injury prevention advocates to reduce traffic deaths and injuries through increased safety belt use. On May 26, 1999, Governor John Engler signed this historical bill. The new law will take effect in April, 2000.

The legislation removes the secondary enforcement provision for non-safety-belt use by adult drivers and front seat passengers. Additionally, the bill strengthens Michigan's child passenger safety law by requiring children under the age of 4 years old to be restrained in a child passenger seat whether in the front or in the rear of a vehicle. The current law allows children that are 2 and 3 years old to be restrained only by a seat belt if in the rear seat. In Michigan, the law has the potential to save 100 lives annually and prevent 3,000 injuries. That translates to financial savings of \$170 million.

Specific provisions of the bill include:

- The driver and all front seat passengers must wear safety belts.
- All children under 4 years old must be in a child safety restraint that meets federal standards, whether in the front or rear seat.
- If there are more passengers than there are belts available, and all belts are being used, the driver is in compliance.
- Violators face a civil infraction and a \$25 fine. Points will not be assessed.
- Law enforcement agencies must investigate all reports of harassment that result from the enforcement of this law.
- The Secretary of State will engage an independent organization to conduct a three-year study and report on the effect this law may have on the number of incidents of police harassment with an annual report each year thereafter.
- An additional study will be coordinated by the Secretary of State to analyze the money savings, if any, as a result of this law and report the findings to specified legislative bodies.
- The intent of the legislation is that enforcement will be conducted in a manner to save lives, and not harass the citizens of Michigan.
- The primary enforcement provisions of the bill will sunset (revert to secondary enforcement) if the safety belt usage rate is less than 80 percent by December 31, 2005.

A big thank you to all our corporate partners who took a proactive stand on this important piece of legislation. Many of you contacted your legislators and encouraged passage of this historic bill.

## Michigan NETS Advisory Council



Pictured from left to right: Tom Gottschalk, Cook Institute; Terry Vissers, Spartan Stores, Inc.; Tony Dacoba, Pharmacia & Upjohn; Laura Ford, Kellogg Company; Jay Minotas, General Motors; Tom Church, United Parcel Service & Dan Vartanian, Michigan NETS Coordinator. Not pictured: Tom Reel, Traffic Safety Association of Michigan; John Bishop, Detroit Edison.

Michigan NETS Advisory Council members provide guidance and feedback to the State's NETS coordinator. One of the main purposes of the Advisory Council is to gain insight from Michigan businesses, both small and large, and utilize their collective years of experience in safety to benefit our entire Michigan NETS membership.

## Minor Mirror Adjustments Eliminate Blind Spot

**G**eorge Platzer. He calls himself an engineering consultant, although when we first heard about his novel way to increase driving safety, we considered "crackpot" or "loony tune" a more apt description.

Platzer specializes in rearview mirrors and holds several patents on them. He recently presented his latest idea to the prestigious Society of Automotive Engineers at its annual meeting and bull session on what's new and what's coming in automotive engineering innovation and technology.

What Platzer now has come up with is a simple way for motorists to eliminate the blind spot in their rearview mirrors by merely changing the method in which they adjust the setting of their mirrors. No radar, no computer sensors, no need for satellites circling overhead. What a rube.

So we set off on the roadway to give Platzer's idea the acid test-real life experience. And what did we find after

about five minutes of travel along the tollway? That Platzer is a genius. If Nobel gave out prizes for mirror adjustments, Platzer would have one on his mantle. If Pulitzer rewarded the doing away of blind spots, Platzer would walk away with the plaque.

Here's what Platzer suggests: Forget how we learned to adjust our outside mirrors by plopping behind the steering wheel and turning the mirrors so that we just saw the side of our car looking back at us in the mirrors. Instead, he advises, adjust the driver-side mirror by resting your head against the driver's side window and then turning the mirror so that you can just see the side of your own car. Once set, then scoot over to the center of the front seat and turn the passenger-side mirror so that you can just see the side of your own car. Then slip behind the wheel and drive. You won't see your own car in either mirror, yet what you do see is far better. Cars behind you show up, as always, in the inside rearview mirror above the dash. But the instant the car leaves your field of vision on the inside mirror, the outside mirrors pick up the car.

No blind spot, no delays, no wondering where that car about to pass you has disappeared to, no waiting a few seconds for the car that you just saw in your inside mirror to finally show up in your outside mirrors. You suddenly find yourself enjoying panoramic vision. Vehicles behind or to the side no longer lay in hiding in that wicked old "blind Spot" because there is no blind spot. All three mirrors now work in harmony with one another. Give it a try. And thanks, Mr. Platzer.

Reprinted: by Jim Mateja, Traffic Safety-September/October 1995

## **NETS National Launches Novice Driver Practice Kit**

**T**he biggest risk facing teens today is not drugs or alcohol, school violence or suicide...it's motor vehicle crashes. That is why the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS), through a grant from The UPS Foundation, developed the Novice Driver Practice Pack.

The development of the pack included extensive research into the variety of materials currently available for parents of novice drivers. The final product includes a handbook for the adult mentor or coach and a road map with a series of progressively complex drives designed to increase both the skill level and confidence of the novice driver.

"Driving is a skill not unlike playing basketball or playing a musical instrument," says Susan B. Herbel, executive director of national NETS. "The idea of practice in these instances is readily accepted, but unfortunately, the same level of commitment to practice time does not necessarily transfer to the increasingly difficult task or learning to drive." Once the NETS Novice Driver Practice was developed, it was reviewed by an advisory committee comprised of experts in the fields of driver education and traffic safety. To add further credibility to the effort, it was pilot tested in Maryland, Ohio and Tennessee using delivery mechanisms including a motor vehicle administrative office, driver training schools and parents of teens via a high school. The pilot was extremely successful.

As an employer, we believe this Novice Driver Practice Pack would provide your young driver-to-be an excellent resource. The guide can easily be placed in the glove compartment of your vehicle and be used as a constant guide for your teenage son or daughter. This guide would be an excellent resource to make available to employees and families at any business. The kits are priced at \$14.95 each plus an additional charge for shipping and will be available by contacting Dan Vartanian, Michigan NETS Coordinator at the Office of

Highway Safety Planning. For more information, please contact Dan at (517) 333-5322 or e-mail [vartanid@state.mi.us](mailto:vartanid@state.mi.us).

## **Safety Precautions for Smooth Truck, Motorist Relations**

**T**he 1999 American Trucking Association's (ATA) Road Team has compiled a list of traffic safety tips so motorists and truck drivers can safely share the road:

- Before leaving the driveway, inspect the vehicle; many problems that strand motorists on the side of the road can be prevented.
- Leave early to accommodate delays, especially construction zones.
- Obey the posted speed limits.
- Drive with headlights on in rain, fog, snow, at dusk, and at dawn. Slow down at night and when weather conditions are bad.
- Leave a safety cushion between you and the vehicle in front.
- Anticipate the unexpected-look one-quarter mile ahead for a safe path.
- Always try to see the big picture; anticipate the needs of all drivers.
- Practice patience and courtesy toward drivers, and avoid erratic drivers.
- Pull off to parking areas to use cell phones.
- Signal lane changes.
- If a truck is signaling a lane change, allow it space to do so.
- Trucks are heavier and take longer to safely respond and come to complete stop.
- At intersections, stay behind the white lines so trucks can safely complete their turns. Don't get between the truck and the curb when the truck is making right turn.
- On highway entrance ramps, highway traffic has the right of way; maintain proper speed and use smooth merging techniques. Avoid slowing down in front of a truck at a ramp.
- Trucks cannot always stop to assist, but most will use radios to contact police or highway patrols. More safety information from America's Road Team, including tips for tired drivers and safe construction zone driving, is available on the ATA website, [www.trucking.org](http://www.trucking.org).

## **Crashes Impact Work; AAA Urges Safety Education**

**N**early 40 percent of workers are impacted by motor vehicle crashes each year and lose an average of 4.3 hours of work, according to a recent study by the American Automobile Association.

AAA surveyed 398 employees in its national office. Thirty-eight percent said that they, a family member, or a friend had been involved in at least one crash during the past year. In addition, 16 percent reported two or more crashes involving themselves, a friend, or family member, while 2 percent said the number was five crashes or more.

These findings reinforce the need for employers to help their employees learn safe driving habits to reduce both the human and financial impact of vehicle crashes, according to AAA.

"We conducted the survey because we wanted to know how traffic crashes affect our employees. But we also wanted to get the message out to corporate America that it needs to focus on this issue because it has tremendous impact on companies and their employees," said Mark Edwards, managing director of AAA Traffic Safety.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, motor vehicle crashes are the number one cause of workplace injury and death in the United States. Three American workers lose their lives each day, and each year employers lose more than \$450 billion in legal expenses, property damage, and lost productivity.

According to AAA, companies can estimate the number of labor hours lost to crashes in a year by using the following formula: multiply the number of employees by 38 percent and then by 4.3 hours. For example, a company with 5,000 employees would lose an estimated 8,170 labor hours per year-the equivalent of nearly four full-time employees.

AAA is a member organization of the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS).

## **Show support for Operation ABC's November mobilization**

**M**ichigan businesses are asked to show their support for Operation ABC's next mobilization, Nov. 22-28.

Operation ABC is a national, high-visibility enforcement campaign focusing on child passenger restraint violations.

Hundreds of Michigan law enforcement agencies participated in the last mobilization period, which took place over Memorial Day weekend.

Recently a special "endorsement for enforcement" form was included in the last Safe and Sober planner mailed to all NETS members. Please complete this form and fax to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) Office of Communications and Outreach at 202-366-6916. For additional copies of the "endorsement for enforcement" form, contact Dan Vartanian at (517) 333-5322 or e-mail at [vartanid@state.mi.us](mailto:vartanid@state.mi.us).

## **Fourth Annual Michigan Traffic Safety Summit a Success!**

**T**he Fourth Annual Traffic Safety Summit was held May 11-12, 1999 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Dearborn, Michigan. The event, this year was in conjunction with the Michigan Intelligent Transportation Society's annual meeting and attracted over 350 traffic safety professionals from around the state.

Topics for this year's conference included school bus seat belts, red light cameras, repeat offender laws, college alcohol programs, mature drivers, aggressive driving and many other traffic safety issues.

The success of this year's conference in large part was due to the generous financial and in kind support

provided by our corporate partners. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the following businesses: Platinum sponsors: General Motors Safe Driving Program, Ford Motor Company, United Parcel Service Gold Sponsors: AAA of Michigan, Allstate Insurance Company, Meijer Inc., Nationwide Insurance Enterprise, Shering-Plough Silver Sponsors: William Beaumont Hospital, Boise Cascade Office Products, Botsford General Hospital, Cadillac Asphalt Paving, Consoer Townsend Envirodyne Engineers, Consumers Energy, John R. Howell Co., Laser Technology, Michigan Asphalt Paving Association, Orchard, Hiltz & McCliment, Inc., Pamar Enterprises, Traffic Control Corporation In kind contributions: Albin Business Center, Boyne USA, Inc., Brodin Studios, Inc., Century Products, Cosco, The Emerald at Male Creek Golf Course, Hayworth, Inc., Hyatt Regency Hotel, Kmart Corporation, Nationwide Insurance Enterprise Next year's conference promises to be a valuable opportunity to learn more about emerging traffic safety issues, hear about community programs that are making a difference, and share updates on federal, state, and local traffic safety initiatives. The Annual Traffic Safety Summit will take place April 25-26, 2000 at the Kellogg Center, East Lansing, Michigan.

## **Michigan NETS-What's NEW?**

### **Defensive Driving Course Offered to NETS members**

More than 40 businesses took advantage of a Michigan NETS sponsored defensive driving program. Businesses across the state participated in classes that took place in Lansing and Grand Rapids. The National Safety Council's Defensive Driving Course, DDC-4 was utilized during the training sessions. The four-hour class was designed for safety supervisors, human resource managers, risk managers, trainers and others who have responsibilities for employee safety. Each participant received a certificate of course completion and a student manual as well as a packet of printed materials on defensive driving. The seminar also provided information on how to use the internet and other resources to assist with implementing a defensive driving program in your organization. "Thank you for this well rounded class. This course contains a lot of information that will be useful to a broad range of people."

A future seminar is planned in the fall of 1999 in SE Michigan. If you are interested in attending this or other defensive driving courses, please contact Dan Vartanian, Michigan NETS Coordinator at (517) 333-5322 or e-mail, [vartanid@state.mi.us](mailto:vartanid@state.mi.us).

### **New "tool kit" soon to be available**

In the very near future a new software package currently under development will be made available to businesses in Michigan. This new "tool kit" will contain matrices for estimating the cost of crashes in an individual organization, estimating the cost savings that could be generated by implementing a traffic safety program, and a program planner for determining action steps and a budget. It also accesses the NETS web site and allows you to receive available newsletter articles, fact sheets and artwork. A final printout is made available for presentation to management. Of course, this is all in the attempt to help safety managers and others within an organization convince upper management of the need to address the issue of traffic safety in the work place.

Michigan NETS will notify you as soon as this product becomes available.

# NEWS

## YOU CAN USE

### **Public Information Program Targets Aggressive Driving**

The annoying, aggressive drivers will soon be seeing themselves in a new light: as road hogs. The road hog is the central character in a new Office of Highway Safety Planning campaign to remind people about this unbecoming driving behavior. Stay Cool. Stay Human, Don't Be A Road Hog.

The new campaign features billboards, posters, bumper stickers and public service announcements. A formal campaign launch will take place yet this summer. The printed materials-posters and bumper stickers-are available in limited quantities through the Michigan Resource Center. They can be contacted toll free by calling (800) 626-4636.

### **Safe Driving Tips**

Drivers who don't think ahead may find themselves bumper to bumper with the car in front of them. To law enforcement officers, it's called "not being able to stop within an assured clear distance," also known as a violation of the basic speed law. Most of us call it tailgating. It is the most common cause of traffic crashes.

To avoid becoming another traffic crash statistic, always think ahead of your car. Stopping your car safely requires being alert, having a good reaction time, and knowing the mechanical limitations of your vehicle. Always plan ahead. Allow no less than 2 seconds between vehicles during the daytime, 3 seconds at night, and 4 seconds during inclement weather.

Finally, keep your eyes on the road, never drink and drive, and always wear your safety belt.